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We the Cosmopolitans: Moral & Existential Conditions of Being Humans by Lisette Josephides & Alexandra Hall, eds.

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Josephides, Lisette, and Alexandra Hall, eds. *We the Cosmopolitans: Moral and Existential Conditions of Being Human*. New York: Berghahn, 2014. viii + 186 pages. Hardcover, \$80.00.

We the Cosmopolitans is a selection of six vignettes dealing with cosmopolitanism as a sociological, political, and anthropological multidisciplinary field, integrating moral, religious, and humanitarian concepts into an ethical foundation of behavior for the universal human subject. It demonstrates how we are fundamentally and deeply linked to humankind and shows that we can preserve a moral allegiance to this community while retaining both our worldly citizenship and our local identities. To the term cosmopolitanism, the editors, both anthropologists with research interests in politics and culture, attach characteristics of kindness, tolerance, and hospitality, adding that it implies an attitude of altruistic, progressive civility. To this point, social anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen points out that "while some speak of cosmopolitans as individuals who are open to diversity and tolerant of difference, or ... as a disembedded elite with a transnational class habitus, others see cosmopolitanism as a world-view competing with, and possibly replacing, nationalism" (p.136).

In his evaluation of the aporetics of cosmopolitanism, Ronald Slade, a peace and conflict studies specialist, describes the evolution of the concept from its origins in ancient Greece to its emergence as an element of Enlightenment thought. While the original goal of cosmopolitanism was privileged in nature and concerned the relationship between the self and the world, later anthropological interpretations would shift the focus to the relationship between the self and other. According to Kant, we have the right to global mobility, what he calls "the right to the surface," within the framework of peaceful relationships, as well as the expectation of hospitality, association, and asylum. Property, on the other hand, is a social relationship and not a right. "Confinement" (i.e., lack of mobility) and cosmopolitanism are not mutually exclusive. Kant's "right to the surface" is tempered with the practical realities of national and geopolitical restrictions.

Anthropologist Nigel Rapport, in his essay on accommodating the universal human subject, considers moral social relations, in which others honor the sovereignty of one's symbolic space. Rapport uses the British Constance Hospital as a case study to illustrate the formal and informal behavioral contracts involving a person's symbolic, private space; he understands "goodness" to be refraining from visiting one's desires on others. Rapport describes social arrangements as "voluntary, episodic contracts" in which the individual assumes the roles of hosts and guests, affording one another mutual recognition and gratification. As he explains, "Anyone exists not as a cultural object but as the universal human subject. Cosmopolitanism predicates 'the human' as a condition over and against the peculiarities of social setting and cultural tradition" (p. 65). Simply put, the concept of "Anyone" transcends the limitations of social constraints and is part of a larger, global community.

Political theorist Alexandra Hall's account of a suicide at the Locksdon Immigration Removal Center considers cosmopolitan morality in the British immigration system. The commonality of humanity, which transcends the greater political or national order, is evidenced through the progressive stripping of the detainees of any political, social, or legal recourse. Locksdon is a zone of indistinction; the concept of detention contradicts inclusive politics and the cosmopolitan characteristics of compassion and moral responsibility in social situations.

Chapters from three social anthropologists follow. Anne Sigfrid Grønseth introduces the concept of embodied cosmopolitanism as an experience between self and other through a case

study of Tamil refugees in Norway to describe the role of pain as an embodied social experience. Meanwhile, Marc Schiltz recounts the successes of the Society of African Missions (SMA) in welcoming the other and imperiling the self, preaching love and the social gospel instead of colonization as a means of evangelism. Finally, Thomas Hylland Eriksen addresses the controversy in Denmark (and later Norway) over cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad. These not only served to alienate Danish Muslims, but in fact sparked international outrage and strained diplomatic ties. The Norwegian foreign minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, finally intervened and wisely stated that freedom of expression did not justify insulting others. Eriksen suggests that intentional provocations stand in opposition to cosmopolitan values of hospitality and tolerance and do not contribute to a universal, higher order. As this vignette illustrates, not all webs of community are equally resilient. The author maintains that it is unwise to suggest that freedom of the press exists for unfettered freedom of expression, even if Muslims offended by the images had an obligation to avoid such blasphemous material.

We the Cosmopolitans is an intellectually stimulating and thought-provoking discussion of the theoretical and practical applications of contemporary cosmopolitanism. The book guides us to quantify ethical considerations as we contemplate what morality is and how we might transcend social, political, and cultural differences and communicate the common denominators of the human condition across boundaries. As this volume shows, the “other” is a global human actor, with universal needs for self-realization. Whether we view cosmopolitanism as altruism, social gospel, or secular humanism, we must recognize how it addresses the intrinsic, unique characteristics of the human condition and the need to transcend boundaries in the interest of contributing to the global human community.

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